



# Museum Insider

## Quincy Mining Company Records Processed

During the uncertain years of the Great Depression, mining operations at the Quincy Mine sporadically ceased and restarted with the fluctuating price of copper. Many of the staff at the mine office on Quincy Hill were furloughed during periods of work stoppages. They often left their work files, office supplies, and personal effects at their desks, ready and waiting for them to return to work. This is how Keweenaw National Historical Park staff found the second floor of the mine office building when it was acquired by the park in 2001.

When the Quincy Mine reopened during World War II, the company operated with a reduced office staff, occupying only the first floor of the office building. Older records were stored in the attic, basement, and second floor of the building, where boxes were piled on top of the otherwise undisturbed desks.

**“It was almost like an archaeological site,”** said Chief of Museum and Archival Services Brian Hoduski. **“We went through the rooms with flashlights and discovered layer upon layer of Quincy Mining Company history.”** Beneath the voluminous company records, park staff also found employees’ personal correspondence, checkbooks, eyeglasses, and a half-full can of coffee from the 1930s. **“They left everything!”** Hoduski exclaimed.

About 375 linear feet of Quincy records from the office building had previously been donated to the Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections in



HAI processing archivist Annelise Doll is shown here with some of the recently processed Quincy Mining Company records at the Keweenaw NHP archives facility in Calumet.

1991. But another 310 linear feet were still left in the building when it was purchased by the park in 2001. These records were cleaned and housed in archival folders and boxes, but as of 2011, hadn’t yet been fully processed; that is, arranged and described so that they could be made available to researchers. These records made up a substantial portion of Keweenaw NHP’s archival processing backlog.

Starting in 2011, the National Park Service funded a nation-wide archives backlog project contracted through the Washington office. After a competitive bidding process, this contract was awarded to History Associates, Inc. (HAI) of Rockville, Maryland. HAI archivists Owen Ellis of Romeo, Michigan, and Annelise Doll, of Hancock, arrived at Keweenaw NHP in August of 2011, and began

processing the Quincy records. It took almost a year of full-time work to complete the project. As part of the project, a finding aid was produced for the collection, enabling researchers to understand the content and context of the Quincy records.

**“Along with the material at Michigan Tech,** these records provide fascinating, comprehensive documentation of the day-to-day operations and overall history of the Quincy Mining Company,” Doll said. Annelise also found references to her own family as she worked with the Quincy records. **“This collection is sure to be of interest to both scholars and family history researchers,”** she said.

For more information, please contact park archivist Jeremiah Mason at (906)483-3032.

## Donating to Keweenaw NHP

Keweenaw National Historical Park was established in 1992 to preserve and interpret the nationally significant resources related to copper mining in the Keweenaw Peninsula, historic and prehistoric.

Some of these resources are too big to miss – including shaftrockhouses, commercial blocks, poorrock piles, and parks – but Keweenaw NHP also preserves smaller-scale resources such as miners' lunch pails, fraternal regalia, personal letters, and family photographs.

The park's primary purpose in collecting these items and others like them is to preserve them for posterity. The objects and archives are also available for research use, and contribute to educational exhibits, such as the *Risk and Resilience* exhibit at the Calumet Visitor Center. However, these secondary uses are always carefully managed so that the primary goal of preserving the museum objects and archives is not compromised.

Many items in the collections were donated by current and former Copper Country families who wished to see their own family history preserved, and wanted to contribute to the broader understanding of the history of the Copper Country overall. The NPS is very grateful to donors for their foresighted generosity.

Donating material to a professionally managed museum or archival repository will ensure that the donated items will be properly cared for in years to come. Professional repositories in the Copper Country include Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, found online at <http://www.lib.mtu.edu/mtuarchives>, Finlandia University Finnish American Heritage Center Archives and Museum, found online at <http://finlandia.edu/FAHAM>, and Keweenaw National Historical Park, found online at <http://www.nps.gov/kewe>. Each institution has a different mission, and a different policy for selecting material they will collect. Please contact them directly if you have any questions.

If you are interested in donating material to Keweenaw NHP, please contact Chief of Museum and Archival Services and Museum Curator Brian Hoduski at (906) 483-3026 or [brian\\_hoduski@nps.gov](mailto:brian_hoduski@nps.gov), or Archivist Jeremiah Mason at (906) 483-3032 or [jeremiah\\_mason@nps.gov](mailto:jeremiah_mason@nps.gov).

## Wertin & Company Store Records Donated

Catey and George Bolton were always aware that there was a lot of old stuff in the attic of Catey's family home in Calumet, so when it came time to replace the roof on the house, they contacted Jeremiah Mason, the archivist at Keweenaw NHP. The Boltons felt that the material might be historically significant, and worried that it might be damaged during the reroofing project. In the hot, dusty attic, they found stacks of ledgers documenting the day-to-day business of the Wertin and Company dry goods and grocery store on 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Red Jacket, dating from 1874 to 1905.

The records primarily date to a period of time when the business was administered by the estate of Joseph Wertin, Jr., from 1895 to 1905, and include account books for individual customers, invoice ledgers, cash books, petty ledgers, day books, inventory ledgers, purchase ledgers, collection ledgers, and other miscellaneous records. "This collection represents the most complete set of records for an historic commercial business in the Calumet Unit of

Keweenaw National Historical Park that we know of," Mason said. "We are very grateful to Catey and George for their generosity in sharing their family history."

Joseph Wertin Sr. first established a store in the Copper Country in Hancock in 1864. His son, Joseph Wertin Jr., managed the Red Jacket store after it opened in 1870. The family is prominent in the history of the Upper Peninsula. In business and through marriage, they were associated with the Ruppes, the Boschs, and the Kaisers. Joseph Jr.'s brother John, who changed the spelling of his name to Vertin, as it is pronounced, was the third bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Marquette and Sault Ste. Marie, from 1879 until his death in 1899.

In addition to the store records, the Boltons have also donated a number of religious prints, Mrs. Joseph Wertin Jr.'s mourning dress, digital copies of many historic family photos, and other items from the family home.



Employees – and records – are shown in this historic photo (ca. 1900) of the business office at the Wertin & Co. store on 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Red Jacket (Calumet). Records from the store were recently donated to Keweenaw NHP by descendants of the Wertin family.

# Risk and Resilience Opens at Calumet Visitor Center

*Risk and Resilience*, Keweenaw National Historical Park's first large-scale interpretive exhibit, opened to great fanfare at the new Calumet Visitor Center on October 27, 2011.

The exhibit showcases over 300 museum objects, and well over 1,000 archival items were used in the production of the exhibit panels, text, audio-visual programs, and films. Some of these objects and archival items were provided for use in the exhibit by park partner institutions, including Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Coppertown Mining Museum, and Houghton County Historical Society, among others.

Many of the items featured in *Risk and Resilience* were donated to Keweenaw NHP by private donors. These donors and contributing institutions were honored at an invitation-only reception hosted in the historic third-floor lodge hall at the



Contributors enjoyed a sneak-preview of *Risk and Resilience* at a donor reception on October 26, 2011, as seen here.

Calumet Visitor Center on the eve of its grand opening. Over 100 contributors were listed in the program and recognized by speakers at the event, including park staff, Keweenaw NHP Advisory Commission chairperson Kim Hoagland, NPS Midwest Regional Director Mike Reynolds, and US Senator Carl Levin. After their remarks, attendees were given a sneak preview of the exhibit. A number of donors were very moved when they saw the ways their family

history was used to tell the history of the community.

Hundreds more saw the exhibit for the first time at the grand opening the next day. The objects, photos, and oral history clips used throughout the exhibit helped them relate to Copper Country history as well, whether they were local or visiting from afar.

That's what it's all about," said park historian Jo Urion. "Personal stories and items help people connect to Copper Country history. This area became famous because of copper, and mining processes and technology are important to know about. But it's the personal things—like fraternal ribbons, a well-read family Bible, and the memory of someone's first day working underground—that help visitors understand why this history is important."

"Without museum and archival collections, we wouldn't have an exhibit," Urion said.



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Keweenaw National Historical Park's museum and archival collections are open for research by appointment. Please contact the park archivist to make an appointment:

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

**Comments? Suggestions?**  
If you have comments on this newsletter or suggestions for future issues, or if you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact Jeremiah Mason at the address above.

## Doing Research at Keweenaw NHP

Archival collections at Keweenaw National Historical Park include Calumet and Hecla Mining Company and Quincy Mining Company records, other business records, records from fraternal organizations and churches, personal and family papers, and photographs. For a guide to our collections, researcher forms, and additional information, please visit the Keweenaw NHP website at <http://www.nps.gov/kewe>. Click on History and Culture, and then on Collections.

If you are interested in doing research using the collections at Keweenaw NHP, please contact the park archivist to make an appointment. Contact information is located in the sidebar at the left.

The Keweenaw NHP Archives are located in the Keweenaw History Center, in the former Calumet and Hecla Mining Company Public Library building at the southeast corner of Red Jacket Road and Mine Street in Calumet. Plans for the rehabilitation of the historic C&H Public Library building include changes to allow for universal accessibility. In the meantime, please notify park staff if you are not able to navigate stairs, and they will arrange accommodations for you in another building.

If you are interested in doing family history research in the Keweenaw, the best place to start is Michigan Technological University Archives. Michigan Tech holds the majority of the records available from the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company and the Quincy Mining Company, including employment records. They also have the most complete run of Houghton County directories available in one location, in addition to many other collections. The Michigan Tech Archives are open Monday through Friday from 10AM to 5PM, and are located in the lower level of the J. R. Van Pelt and Opie Library on the Michigan Tech campus in Houghton. Walk-ins are welcome. Please visit the Michigan Tech Archives website at <http://www.lib.mtu.edu/mtuarchives/> for more information.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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## From the Collections of the National Park Service:



Historically, Keweenaw copper was used in many applications throughout the country and around the world. Several items that illustrate this point in the *Risk and Resilience* exhibit at the Calumet Visitor Center were loaned to Keweenaw National Historical Park from other units of the National Park System.

As seen in the photo to the left, copper was used to make brass insignia, buttons, and belt buckles. These items were used by Union soldiers at the battle of Gettysburg, and loaned to Keweenaw NHP by Gettysburg National Military Park. Chemical analysis indicates that Keweenaw copper may also have been used in the Statue of Liberty. The leaf ornament shown here is an original component **from the railing around the statue's torch**, and was loaned to Keweenaw NHP by Statue of Liberty National Monument.